

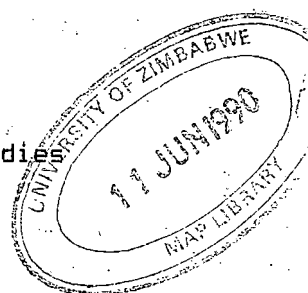
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* Authors alone are responsible for the views expressed in GEM *

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THE CASE OF CHIENDAMBUYA

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INTRODUCTION

Urbanization implies the geographic concentration of population and non-agricultural activities in urban environments and the spatial diffusion of urban values, behaviour, organizations and institutions into surrounding areas. The government of Zimbabwe is setting up growth points in a number of rural areas so as to spread out the urbanization process. In order to understand the strategy, its successes and problems it is useful to review growth point theory and examine Chiendambuya as a case study of the development of growth points in Zimbabwe.

GROWTH POINT THEORY

The theory of growth points rests largely on two basic concepts - agglomeration and diffusion.

Agglomeration is the tendency of economic activities to occur in spatial clusters. Suppose there are three firms intending to establish branches at a particular centre. The first one manufactures windows and door frames, the second is a flour milling company and the third manufactures car tyres. In such a case it is most unlikely that these firms will locate at the same point because their products are not complementary. However, if we take a case where there is a wheat growing industry around the area, there is a flour milling company and a bakery, agglomeration will take place as a result of the firms' decisions to locate in or near the given centre. Agglomeration economies, therefore depend upon the coincident decisions of a number of firms. They differ from other locational economies which might focus on cheap labour or raw materials.

Agglomeration economies cannot be structured effectively without emphasizing the importance of linkages. These are connections between economic activities within a relatively restricted geographic area. Lloyd and Dicken (1977) list three main types of linkages:

1. Production Linkages

Materials and goods move from one firm to another as part of the productive process. They also include subcontract operations.

2. Service Linkages

These embrace a wide range of activities, including the performance

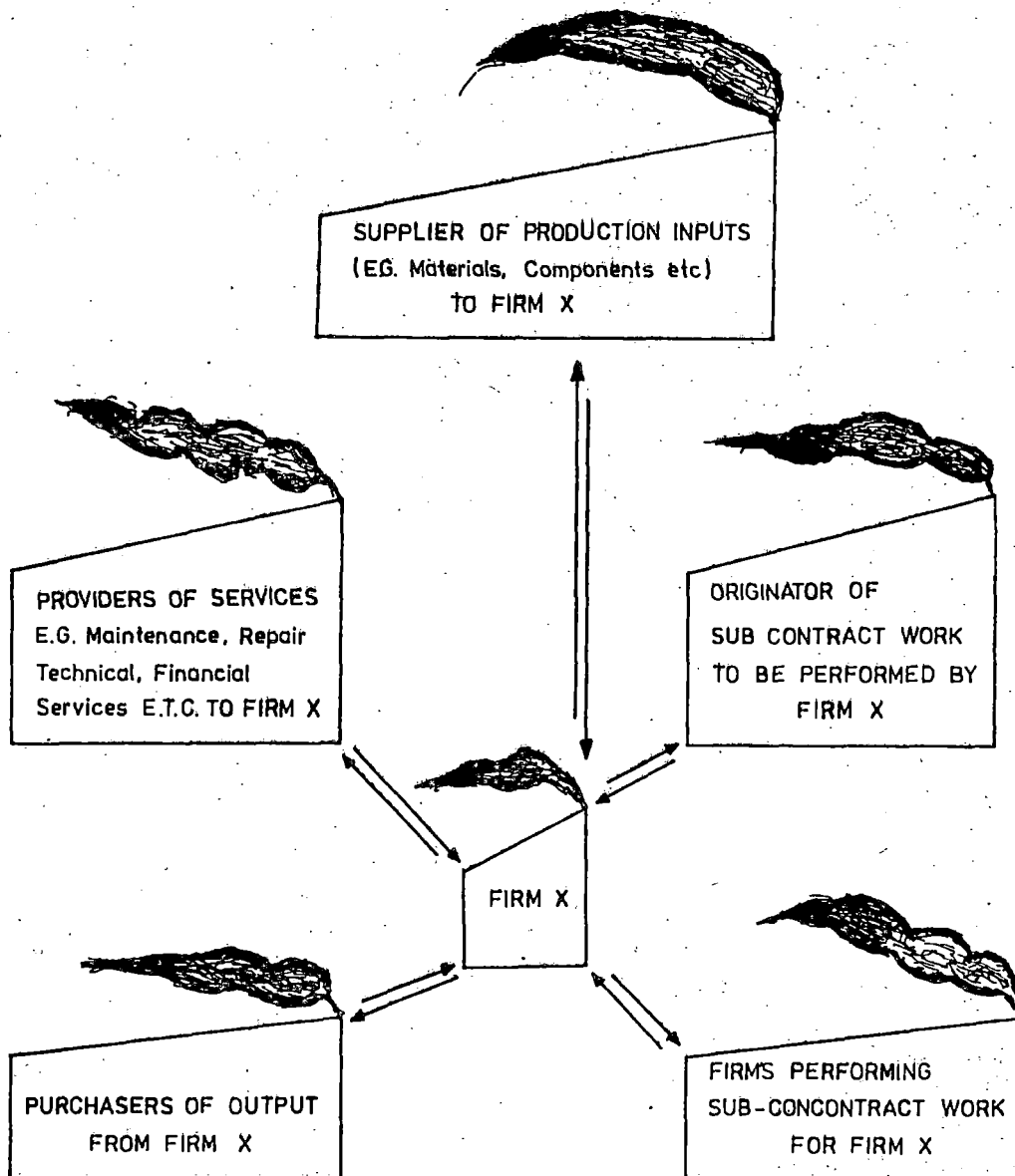
of maintenance work, the provision of machinery and equipment, and the operation of financial and commercial services.

3. Market Linkages

These distribute the firms output and include wholesales and transportation operators. The juxtaposition of linked activities helps reduce transfer costs by facilitating contact between individual units.

The diagram below illustrates some linkages of a hypothetical manufacturing firm - X.

Figure 1: Hypothetical Linkages with a Manufacturing Firm X



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After Lloyd and Dicken (1977) p. 288.

Diffusion specifically refers to the outward spread of innovations from a given centre to the periphery. These innovations are transmitted from the core to lower level centres in hierarchical fashion and from lower level centres into the surrounding hinterland through contagious diffusion (Figure 2A and B).

Figure 2A: Hierarchical Diffusion

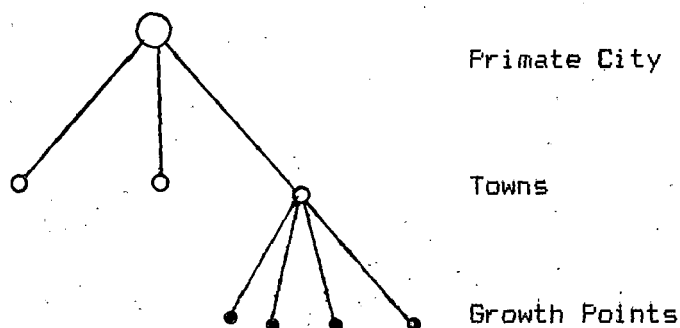
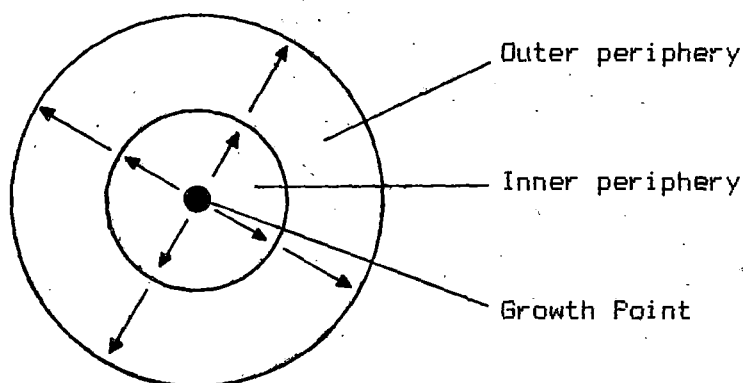


Figure 2B: Contagious Diffusion



Proponents of the diffusionist paradigm believe that once a development innovation process is started at the lower level centre it spreads to the inner periphery and from there it will reach the outer periphery and that eventually modernisation will filter into the whole space economy of the rural periphery. The diffusionist paradigm superficially appears to be plausible. However, the diffusion of values, attitudes, beliefs and innovations is not as obvious and as easy as the diffusion of atoms in the gaseous state. There are, as this article will proceed to show, a number of problems inherent in the diffusion of economic and social activities. Kuklinski (1972) and Myrdal (1971) caution that unless the right mix of economic activities is present or unless the location of the growth point is a highly suitable one, the strategy is bound to fail. It is common practice with governments in the Third World to designate some settlements as growth points without fully committing themselves to the development of these settlements. It is not the 'labelling' of a settlement which will give it the status of growth centre but the actual transformation of such a centre.

The inevitability of diffusion has been seriously questioned by the dependency school which highlights the negative impact of cores on peripheries. The paradigm argues that once growth has begun in a

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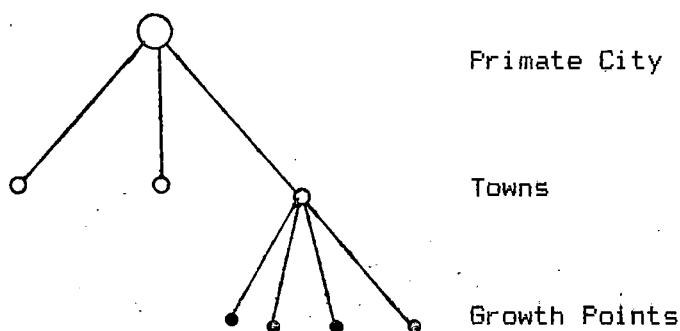
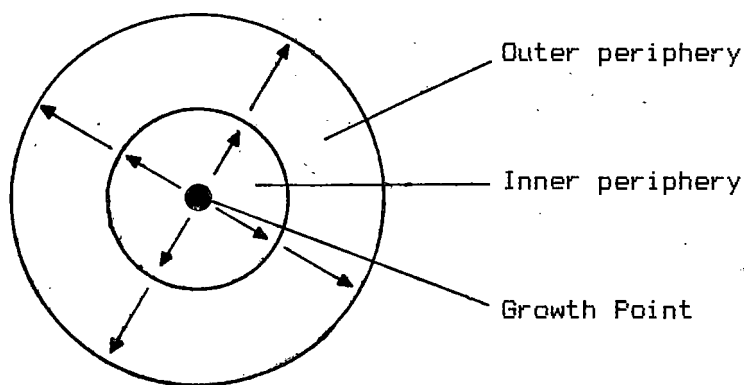


Figure 2B: Contagious Diffusion



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The inevitability of diffusion has been seriously questioned by the dependency school which highlights the negative impact of cores on peripheries. The paradigm argues that once growth has begun in a

region, spatial flows of labour, commodities and capital develop not from the core to the periphery but vice versa i.e. from the periphery to the core. Growth has backwash effects on the periphery since higher returns obtainable in the growth centre result in a loss of skilled workers and locally generated capital in the core's hinterland. These backwash effects thus frustrate growth in stagnating regions and result in polarised development.

Criticisms raised by the dependency school paint a bleak picture of the diffusion process. If growth centres increase spatial inequality, why is the government of Zimbabwe putting a lot of effort into them? We now turn to the development of growth points and government policy in Zimbabwe.

DEVELOPMENT OF GROWTH POINTS AND GOVERNMENT POLICY IN ZIMBABWE

The Zimbabwean government does not believe that a development model which worked in the West or East will automatically work here if it is used without modification. By the same token, there is no formula which demands that a development model which failed in India or Latin America must fail in Zimbabwe. Each country is unique. Countries differ in resource base, social structures, historical background, location, size, population and political economy. Before the government adopted the growth centre regional development strategy, it had to find out whether there were any suitable alternatives. It concluded that there was no development model which was perfect. Each country is supposed to select a development model which has minimal contradictions with its national ideology and goals. The setting up of growth points to reduce the current rural-urban imbalance was recommended. It may be even easier to establish agglomeration economies in selected growth points in centrally planned economies, such as envisaged in Zimbabwe, than in unplanned open market systems.

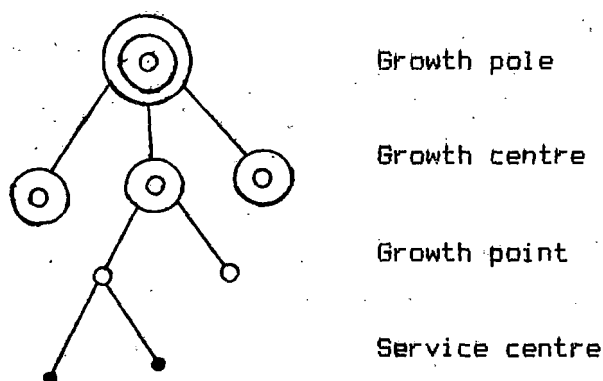
In 'Zimbabwe: At Five Years of Independence' it is stated that:

... in accordance with the policy of growth with equity the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development launched a programme to establish and develop a hierarchy of towns and permanent settlements in order to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To create focal points of urban development in remote or previously neglected communal areas by providing essential infrastructural services to the rural population.
2. To effect and facilitate the decentralisation of administrative, social and economic activities so as to give rural inhabitants an opportunity for better participation in development activities at the local level.
3. To improve the living standards of rural inhabitants and arrest rural-urban migration by facilitating employment opportunities at these centres through the provision of attractive physical infrastructure and other amenities to potential investors (1985, p.140).

Misra (1972) distinguishes between service centres, growth points, growth centres and growth poles. A service centre is the lowest

hierarchy in the process of planned urbanisation. It serves a population of 5000 to 10 000 people living in one village or dispersed in a number of villages and hamlets. Service centres are supposed to have grocery stores, general merchant shops, restaurants, primary and junior high schools, a sub-post office, co-operatives, agricultural extension services, a community centre and other basic facilities. Growth points serve between ten and twenty service points. Each growth point should have 10 000 to 50 000 people, but the total population it serves includes its periphery and ranges from 50 000 to 100 000 people. Growth points specialize in agro-industries i.e. the handling and processing of agricultural products. Facilities at a growth point include a police station, extension service, a post office, banks, a permanent market place, warehousing, junior college, government as well as private depots handling agricultural inputs, and machines and repair shops capable of repairing tractors, lift pumps, trucks, cars, motorcycles etc. Growth centres have a population ranging from 50 000 to 500 000 and each centre serves 1 000 000 to 2 000 000 people spread over a large region. The chief function of a growth centre is manufacturing. Growth poles have populations ranging from 500 000 to 2 500 000. They have tertiary functions which predominate over secondary (manufacturing) and primary (extractive) functions.



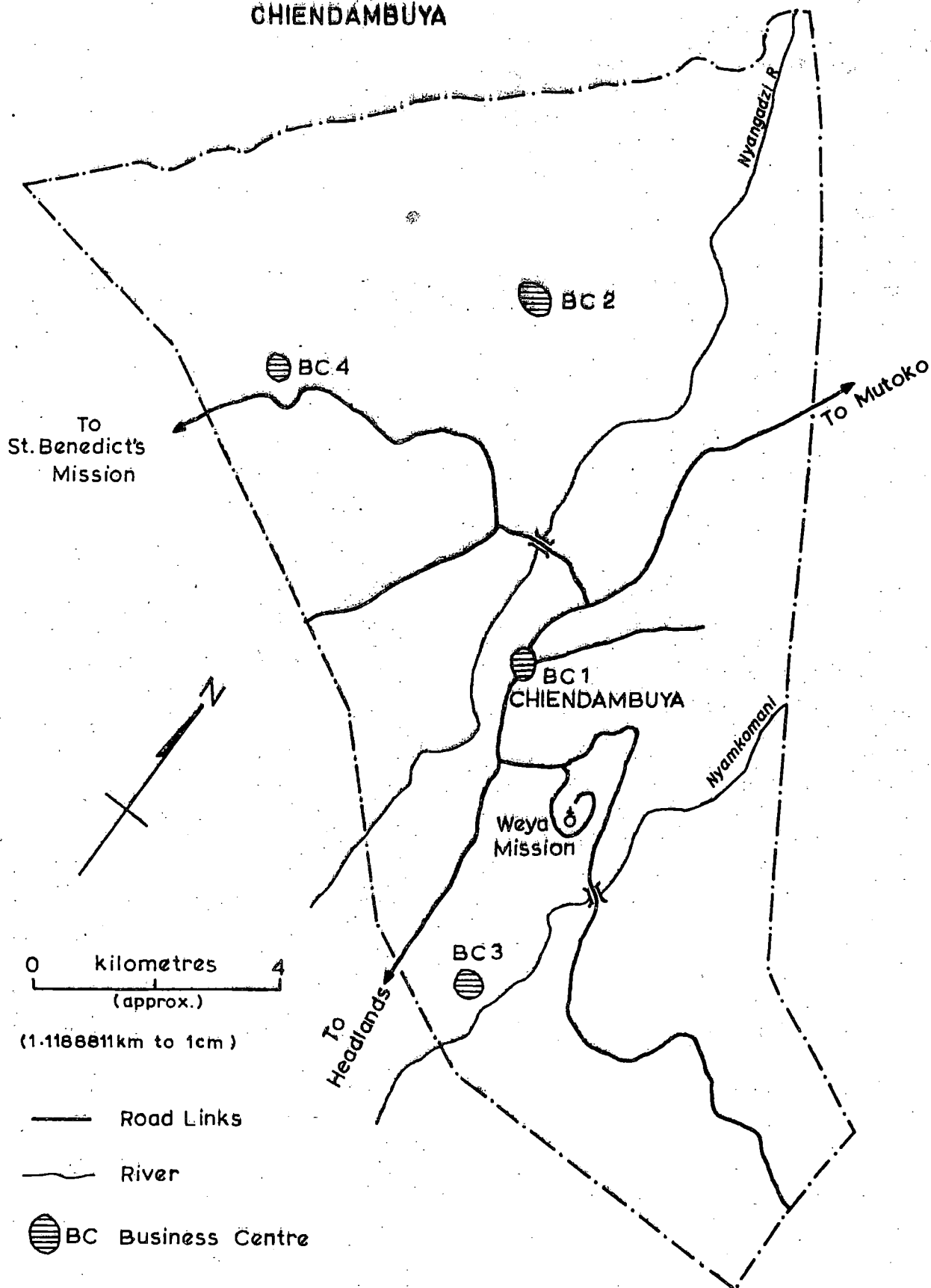
Much of the discussion of growth points is focused on low than high levels of the hierarchy since the issue is often one of initiating growth in depressed regions. High levels depend on the momentum generated in the early phase of their development and need not concern us here. Rather, let us proceed to examine Chiendambuya's potential to develop into a growth point for Maungwe district.

CHIENDAMBUYA AS A GROWTH POINT

Using the criterion of population and social services Chiendambuya currently qualifies as a rural service centre and not a growth point. When it is up-graded to a growth point, it will be the functional administrative headquarters of the whole district and offer services to a total population of about 100 000 people, as well as contain rudiments of agro-industrialization.

Chiendambuya is well connected with roads from all the parts of Weya and Maungwe District (Figure 3). The main road from the biggest settlement of the district, Headlands, passes through Chiendambuya to Mtoko and the border with Mozambique. The road from St. Bennedict's Mission and other smaller primary schools passes through Chiendambuya. The river Nyanyadzi flows close to the service centre. The settlement

WEYA DISTRICT CHIENDAMBUYA



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is on gently sloping land with plenty of room for social services and industrial development. These factors undoubtedly influenced the government's decision to develop Chiendambuya into a growth point. But of even greater significance is the need to decentralise Zimbabwe's resources if economic development is to be realised in depressed regions. Chiendambuya is situated in a backward area of Weya district. It is hoped that by selecting the centre as a focus of social services and administration, the development process will be triggered off. The basic services and infrastructure will act as a catalyst in this process. In order to increase the centre's potential development, the local government (Maungwe District Council) has made tremendous effort in laying out basic infrastructure; a network of roads has been made; a survey of the area and delimitation into sections and stands according to functions has also been made; piping for water and sewerage works have been constructed; and a peoples' market is already operational.

There are, however, a number of problems to be overcome before Chiendambuya can develop into a growth point. Chiendambuya currently lacks electricity, telephones, banking services, adequate housing and transport facilities. Without these it will almost be impossible to attract business and industry into the area. Settlements that are associated with mineral resources usually grow quickly without many problems, but Chiendambuya is unfortunate because there are no mineral resources in the region. Agricultural production is also limited. In many developed countries like the USSR and Japan, agriculture was used to create the capital needed for urbanisation and industrialisation. Similarly, agriculture in Chiendambuya must be transformed to make it supportive of the planned urbanisation of the district. There is need to increase the number of extension officers and provide more loans. Financial aid should be given to hardworking needy farmers regardless of the property they hold. If property is used as collateral, then the poor will remain poor, and innovation in farming as well as the benefits therefrom will reach only a handful of 'progressive' farmers. Another problem is administrative. During the colonial period, rural councils served the interests of whites on farms while district councils administered Africans in the so-called tribal trust lands. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development has resolved to merge these two authorities into one body. However, offices are presently in Rusape and the continued use of these might stifle Chiendambuya's development. The body also has to adjust to the demands of the new order. These are burning issues that must be solved before Chiendambuya can become a real growth point.

The strategy for development we are suggesting is that we should not only focus our development on the service centre without developing the periphery. The growth of the service centre can only be accelerated if the periphery echoes the vibrations of development coming from the centre.

CHIENDAMBUYA'S PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

It should not be taken for granted that once basic services like electricity and banking are available entrepreneurs will rush to the area to take stands. It will take some time before commercial and industrial stands are operational. The entrepreneurs' decision to establish shops or not will be determined by the profits they hope to get. Again, business people usually wait for others to move in so that economies of scale may be attained. In other words, the entrepreneurs will take stands in trickles. Moreover, some will acquire stands but

not quickly develop them because of speculative reasons. Hence the government has to be prepared to incur some initial losses from its investment in basic services.

The ministries of Womens' Affairs, Co-operatives and Community Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Local government and Education all have workers who live in Chiendambuya for most of their working days. When these people go to Rusape or Headlands every month-end to cash or deposit their cheques, they spend a lot of money in these towns. This leads to the development of existing towns and the stagnation of their own areas. In a nutshell, peripheries like Chiendambuya are enriching cores such as Rusape and Headlands. If banking facilities and commercial enterprises are established in Chiendambuya, workers and peasants will be encouraged to spend their money there, thus leading to the creation of more jobs and the expansion of the growth point. Projects to transform Chiendambuya should include retailing, metalwork and carpentry, dressmaking, flour milling, baking, a craft centre to promote local culture and utilize available skills, a brick making industry to provide bricks for schools, hospitals, private houses etc, and a liquor outlet, for wherever agglomeration occurs liquor will be consumed in fairly large quantities, but of more significance is the possibility of using revenue from liquor sales for development projects. At the same time the rural periphery should not be a bystander to the unfolding development process. Agricultural projects such as vegetable growing, poultry, beekeeping and pen-fattening of livestock should be set up as well. This would discourage a polarized development of the district. So far little has been said of the role of teachers and other civil servants in the development of Chiendambuya. Let us consider this aspect.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND OTHER CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHIENDAMBUYA

By law, teachers are not allowed to take part in setting up business enterprises. It is felt that if teachers take part in business ventures, they might neglect their work or embezzle funds. The schools would suffer because the quality of education would go down. This assumption is based on the axiom that 'no person can serve two masters'. But in a rural setting who else can be expected to provide money for capital projects at the service centre, if not teachers and other civil servants? The peasants are immersed in poverty and can hardly supply market stalls with enough vegetables. The majority of them live at a subsistence level. The businessmen, who are already established near Chiendambuya, are not prepared to set up shops at Chiendambuya at the moment. They would like to come in when the initial economic hurdles have been cleared by others. Teachers and other civil servants are at present using their disposable income to develop other urban settlements like Rusape.

A method should be devised whereby these people should invest part of their income in the area. One way of doing this is to encourage them to form co-operatives in which the administration is left in the hands of an executive staff. They would provide money for a producer or consumer co-operative while much of the day-to-day organization could be done by paid employees. Teachers and other civil servants who would have provided the initial capital for a project at Chiendambuya would only act as share holders who earn dividends from their shares. Our proposal of how teachers and other salaried people in the rural area can take part in the development of Chiendambuya is, of course, rather

simplified. Details of how it might be implemented need to be worked out but these are not within the scope of this paper.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In many countries, there has been no guarantee that diffusion of development impulses from the district service centre to its periphery will occur. All the development efforts have been directed towards the growth point and the periphery has invariably been neglected. If Zimbabwe is to avoid this, it should have a two-pronged approach: one focussed at the growth point and the other directed at its periphery. The values and attitudes of the people living near the growth point and the whole region must change. All the factors that help to increase agricultural productivity must be introduced to the peasants in the area.

To some observers there must be a backward region in every country. They do not see any reason for any government to be involved and committed to transform such regions. Backward regions are quoted in some of the developed countries, for example the Appalachian region in the USA, the Uzbek republic in the USSR, the Mezzogiorno in Italy, the Slovak region in Czechoslovakia, the Montenegrin region in Yugoslavia, and the south western part of France. This type of thinking is Euro-centric. It is based on the belief that the developed countries should be the yardstick for Third World development. At worst, it can be a cynical excuse for doing nothing about uneven regional development.

Prospects of Chiendambuya becoming a thriving growth point are there, but concerted effort to provide the necessary infrastructure, to mobilize local human and natural resources, and to attract investment has to be made.

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